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MEMOIRS

OF THE LIFE OF

DANIEL WHEELER,

A

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

IN

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

PHILADELPHIA:
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MEMOIRS OF DANIEL WHEELER.

"HAVING frequently derived much valuable instruction from the perusal of narratives of those who have long since exchanged an earthly for a heavenly inheritance, the thought has at times occurred to me, that a short memoir of my own life, however evil, might, under the Divine blessing, be made, in like manner, useful to others.

"Whatever may thus far have impeded any attempt of the kind, I am induced, not as a matter of choice, but as a duty, now in the sixty-first year of my age, to commence the work, as a faithful testimony for the advancement of our holy Redeemer's kingdom in the hearts of my fellow-creatures.

"I was born in London, in 1771: my parents, William and Sarah Wheeler, were members of the established religion of the country, and strict adherents to all its rites and ceremonies. They had a large family of children, whose minds they endeavored to imbue at an early age with the fear of their great Creator—taking them regularly to attend the performance of public worship, and also reading the Holy Scriptures in the family at home; portions of which I well remember reading aloud when very young. I have but a very indistinct recollection of my father's person, not being quite seven years old when he died, leaving five children, of whom I was the youngest. My mother was endowed with a large capacity, combining great sweetness with firmness of mind. Of the loss of such a parent, I was very sensible, being about twelve years old at the time."

D. W. went to sea in the merchant service at an early age, and soon afterwards entered as a midshipman on board a ship of war. His narrative continues:

"This change was to me as an introduction to a school, which is not often equalled, and but seldom surpassed, for vice and immorality.

"It was not long before we sailed for the Isle of Man station. This was a stormy and dangerous passage, in which, through Divine mercy, we were favored to witness a marvellous preservation from shipwreck,—the dawn of day just discovering to us in time the small island of Grasholm; towards which the vessel was drifting in a direct course, and already within a short distance of the breakers.

"During the following year I was received on board a ship of the line, then bearing the flag of a Rear-Admiral. This advance, whilst it seemed to pave the way to promotion, opened at once a door to an extensive range of acquaintance with officers on board, whose [evil] example I endeavored to follow, until nothing but the want of means prevented my going still greater lengths than the worst of them. Whilst in this ship, when about sixteen years of age, having been unwell, and probably led to reflect a little on that account, I was made sensible of a Divine visitation being extended to me: disclosing with indubitable clearness the vanity and emptiness of every earthly station, tarnishing the pride and glory of this perishing world in my sight; and which, though little understood and less regarded at the moment, has since, at different periods of my chequered life, been brought to my remembrance. When this occurred, although then entered into the bond of iniquity, I had not launched so fully into its dreadful abyss, as was afterwards most lamentably the case; and from what I have since witnessed of the strength and power of redeeming love, a belief is induced, that if this warning voice, then sounding in the secret of my sinful heart, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock,' had been hearkened unto, and waited upon, my footsteps, even mine,

would have been conducted from the horrible pit to which they were fast verging.

"I continued nearly six years in the navy: but were all the changes from ship to ship enumerated which took place during that time, and the great variety of incidents which befell me, they would swell this narrative far beyond the limits intended. It may suffice for me to say, that notwithstanding the many and great dangers I was exposed to, and the hardships and sufferings I had to endure, through all of which I was preserved and sustained in a manner at this day inconceivable to myself; yet none of these things were sufficient to soften the rocky heart, or bring me to a sense of my lost condition; for whether on board or on shore, in harbor or at sea, or in whatever country, if I could meet with associates prone like myself, to evil, I was always ready to hasten with them to it, either in word or in deed.

"Towards the latter part of the time of my being in the navy, it was suggested to my lost and bewildered mind, by the subtle destroyer of men, that nothing short of making away with myself, could extricate me from the difficulties by which I was surrounded, and shelter me from shame and disgrace; and the method of its accomplishment was at seasons hinted at. But—blessed be the name of the Lord God of heaven and earth for ever!—his invisible arm preserved me from this dreadful snare; and in the greatness of his love and strength he hath at this distant period put it into the heart of his unworthy creature to record his mighty acts, to his praise and to his glory, with humble and reverent thankfulness. Greatly do I desire, that if this relation should ever fall into the hands of any poor sinners, servants of the cruel taskmaster, as was then my lot, that such may be hereby strengthened and encouraged to look unto the Lord their God for help, even though they may be plunged into the very gulf of despair: for

'his compassions fail not;'—his tender mercies are over all his works; and he will give strength to them that have no might of their own, to resist this, and every other temptation of that wicked one, who was a liar from the beginning."

After all his resources were exhausted, and feeling unwilling to reveal his destitute circumstances to his friends, he entered the army as a volunteer. After all the pains he had taken to screen his fallen situation from notice, he was ordered to Plymouth, the place where, of all others, he had most acquaintance. "But," says he, "I was so completely metamorphosed in appearance, that I was never, in one instance, found out by any whom I had formerly known, even when brought into close contact."

The regiment in which he had enlisted formed part of the garrison of Dublin, during the troubled period of the Irish rebellion.

"Discontent increasing, and disturbances breaking out in the interior of the country, small detachments of troops were despatched from Dublin, to strengthen the authority of the magistrates in their endeavors to maintain public tranquillity, and to afford protection to the peaceable inhabitants from the nightly depredations of numerous gangs of misled and intoxicated desperadoes, to which they and their property were constantly exposed, under a variety of pretences. It was my lot to be chosen with the first of the detached parties, to a share of this dangerous and harassing service; on which, such was at one time the emergency, that we were kept on the alert night after night, without any intermission, for a week together, with only such intervals of rest as could be procured in the daytime. Whilst on this expedition, on a particular enterprise with a constable, I was, to all appearance, reduced to the necessity of taking the life of another to save my own. The constable, perceiving the danger, had left me alone; when I was

suddenly attacked by a poor infuriated creature, in a state little short of perfect madness from continued intoxication, supported by several others, but in a less outrageous condition. I kept him at bay for some time; but at last he got so near that it became every moment more difficult to avoid being reached by the violent strokes he made with some kind of weapon, I think of iron, which were repeatedly received by the firelock in my hands, then loaded with ball. In this situation there seemed left to me no other than the dreadful alternative of shooting him to save myself. I called in vain in the language of appeal to the other people to interfere: they stood by, as if to see how matters were likely to terminate, before they began to act or take a part of any consequence either way, which they nearly carried too far: but when they saw me actually preparing to shoot the man, they hastily cried out 'spare life! spare life!'—which I only wanted their help to enable me to accomplish. They then seized him, and in the midst of the struggle and confusion which took place amongst themselves, my escape was happily effected."

"I have frequently thought of this circumstance since it occurred, I hope with humble thankfulness to the great Preserver of men; and now on committing it to record, as one of those many events in which there was but one step between me and the grave, and whilst shuddering at the strong recollection of it, my soul magnifies that unmerited and amazing mercy, afresh displayed to my understanding. Thus, as my history rolls on, the enormous load of debt which I already owe unto my Lord still accumulates: and verily it never can be liquidated, but in that infinite and wondrous mercy, which delighteth to forgive every repenting sinner, who, in the depths of humility and abasedness of self, has indeed 'nothing to pay' withal."

"Our stay was not long at this place; for the French

revolution, which had occurred about two years before, now began to occasion more frequent movements and changes amongst the military. I was engaged in some hazardous enterprises whilst lying here; and although the town was small, and our time in it short, yet there were sufficient temptations to be found for my unwary feet to fall into."

His regiment being ordered to join the British army on the Continent, they proceeded to Ostend. He says: "After a rather tedious passage they reached Ostend with little more than 9000 troops, where, after a difficult landing, they penetrated the country by way of Ghent. The first halting-place of the army, in the evening of the same day that it left the coast, was called the 'Pigeon's Nest,' but it did not prove a very quiet one,—for by two o'clock in the morning, the advance of the enemy was announced by the firing of the picquets, by which we were surrounded. Whether this attack was intended to alarm only, or to endeavor to take us by surprise, I never understood; if the latter, it certainly failed, for the troops were literally sleeping on their arms, covered with their blankets, so that in a few minutes a line was formed, with the commander-in-chief present. It was, however, considered prudent to remain there no longer; and in half an hour this post was abandoned, and the march continued until noon the next day, when a stoppage occurred, from the French having occupied a bridge over which we had to pass. Notwithstanding the men were almost ready to faint for want of food, having scarcely tasted anything for twenty-four hours; yet on its being proclaimed through the line that volunteers were wanted to force the passage over the bridge, a sufficient number immediately offered; apparently glad of such an opportunity. After three hours' detention, the obstruction was removed. The army then moved forward until midnight, although its course was much impeded by

a tremendous storm of thunder, lightning, and heavy rain, which commenced at nine P. M., and continued several hours. Notwithstanding the constant exposure to every shower of rain that fell, without covering over my head, and with no couch but the earth, and that at times soaked with wet; whilst harassed with fatiguing marches night after night, and with little rest by day; amidst hunger and thirst, being often short of food for days together, and occasionally no [wholesome] water to be had, without digging a well to procure it; and although for several weeks together my clothes were never taken off, but to renew a shirt, and my shoes but seldom off my weary feet; —yet, through all, my health was not materially affected, till near the approach of winter. But in the above description, not one-half has been told of that marvelous mercy which was still extended for my preservation, when many fell by the sword, or were taken captives by the enemy,— when thousands were swept off by pestilence,—and whilst unhurt myself, I saw the wounds of others bleed.

"As the winter approached, the health of the troops began to fail to an alarming and awful extent, from exposure to cold rains which fell almost daily; and yet we were compelled to keep the field, being constantly on the retreat before the greatly superior force of the enemy. As we drew near the walls of Nimeguen, the British forces made a stand, probably to afford time for preparing a floating bridge across the Waal, to secure our retreat behind that river."

As the French used every effort in their power to prevent their retreat, and fresh forces were continually arriving, the contest became more and more severe, and "on the last day the cannon scarcely ceased to roar from sunrise to sunset."

"I had been going about in the wet for several days previous, without the practicability of obtaining dry clothes;

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pleased to put it into the hearts of some of the regiment, who knew the real cause of my absence, to send two of the men back to endeavor to find me out, and render every assistance in their power." They left him with a picquet of cavalry. "Here the wife of a soldier gave me some ground pepper mixed with heated spirits; and although, from the state of my throat, I could scarcely swallow the fiery mixture, yet it proved useful, considerably relieving the pain in my stomach, and renewing the general warmth."

The next morning Daniel Wheeler was put on board a vessel, with other sick and disabled soldiers; the hold was crowded with men, in the various stages of a violent epidemic disorder. A party of French hussars appearing on the banks of the river, such of the sick as were at all able to stand, of whom he was one, were called on to aid the sailors. The French, however, could not bring any cannon to bear, until the rapid current of the Rhine had swept the vessels out of their reach.

Soon after, returning to the hold, the dead body of a fellow-sufferer who had lain next but one to Daniel, was dragged past him. The night came on cold and frosty, and he became much worse, his strength having almost failed him. Notwithstanding his deplorable case, with the assistance of three or four of the people, he was helped to reach the deck, preferring to pass the night in that bleak situation to breathing the close and tainted air of the hold. In two days more they arrived at Rhenin, a town close to the bank of the Rhine, where an old monastery was fitted up as an hospital for the British sick. With the assistance of an acquaintance he was conveyed to the hospital, and a surgeon procured to examine him, who, in answer to a suggestion for his relief, replied, "not aware," continues D. W., "that I heard all that was passing between them, —'He will not want anything long.'"

"By this it was evident that mine was considered a

hopeless case; which could not be wondered at, the disorder having been so fatal, that those who had recovered were said not to average more than one in fifty; and as my attack had been so long neglected, the conclusion was reasonable. In a few days I was so much recruited as to be able to walk about the town: but it was a distinguishing characteristic of this complaint, that having once had it, was no security whatever against a second attack,—and that those who got well through it the first, or perhaps the second time, were frequently its victims on the third encounter. I found by experience that this report was not without foundation, for instead of being fully restored to health again, as for the first few days seemed probable, the disorder returned a second time, and with much more violent symptoms. As a state of high delirium soon came on, I was but a short time sensible of what transpired, after the application of a large blister; except the workings of a terrified imagination, some of the impressions of which, even at this distance of time, are not wholly obliterated from my memory,—so deeply and strongly were they engraven. From the treatment which followed when no longer delirious, the disorder must have been of the nature of typhus. I was wholly unable to move in any direction, from extreme weakness; and so generally was this the case in this disorder, that a man was appointed in every ward to go round occasionally, to turn from one side to the other, such of the patients as were incapable of turning themselves. I was at length brought so near the brink of the grave, that, to all appearance, no alteration for the better could be expected. I am not aware that I had even a wish to live; but my mind was so reconciled to the prospect of death, which then seemed near and inevitable, that I had given my watch into the hands of the person who had visited the galliot, with a request, that he would inform my family where I had ended my days.

Indeed, when some expectation of recovery was at last held out, I could not help looking forward with a feeling of regret, to the probability of having again to encounter the series of hardships and distress, to which I should unavoidably be subjected."

As he regained a little strength, the horrors by which he was surrounded began to be more fully disclosed. Having daily heard the sound of the hammer, he found it to proceed from the nailing up of the coffins in the "dead-house," immediately opposite his windows, "affording," he proceeds, "full opportunity for my beholding the striking and affecting scene, which could not fail to excite feelings of horror and dismay, in one so much enervated by the very disease I now witnessed to be so fatal to others. When the deaths so increased that the Dutch could not supply coffins, the method of sewing up the bodies in the bedding they had occupied was resorted to."

"In looking back at the marvellous manner in which I was sustained through all this conflict, and again restored as one brought back from the dead, I cannot avoid adverting to that period of my illness, when my mind felt so reconciled to the prospect of death, as before-mentioned; and I now fully believe, from what I have since been mercifully favored to experience, that so far from being, in any degree, prepared for such an awful event, a deceptive feeling must have been superinduced by the state of torpor and insensibility in which I then was, and which totally benumbed any better feelings and desires as to the future. To this may be added, a predominating fear of having to endure more of those sufferings, of which I had had no small share; which, the probability of being again restored to health, seemed to banish every hope of escaping. Truly awful is the thought which this view of my then lost condition occasions, when I contemplate the woe and misery which must have been my eternal portion, if unutterable

mercy and long-suffering had been withdrawn: and if the soul had been required of one, who had witnessed no repentance towards God the Judge of all, except what at times the fear of punishment had extorted; and who was a stranger to that saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the 'Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;' —without which, his precious blood would have been shed in vain for me. I should thus have died in my sins, which, unrepented of, would have followed after to judgment, in terrible array against my guilty soul—and yet when my end was apparently so near and inevitable, if such questions as are frequently proposed on the like occasions had been put to me, I have little doubt, but satisfactory answers would have been returned, as to my belief and hope in the essential truths of the Gospel. But, alas! this would have been from hearsay, and traditional report, and not from any heartfelt, saving knowledge of my own: for it is now plain to my understanding, that no man can have saving faith in Jesus Christ, who is unacquainted with, and does not walk in, the light of that Divine Spirit, which is so justly styled the Spirit of Faith.

"It is through this alone, the death and sufferings of Christ, and his whole sacrifice for sin, are availing, and truly applied to all those, who, through faith, lay hold of Him, the true Light and Saviour of them that believe. These can say to others, from blessed and sensible experience,— 'Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world:'—they have received the atonement by him, and they reap the glorious fruit and benefit of his death and suffering for sin, by the sacrifice of himself, and of his resurrection and ascension; in that he ever liveth to make intercession for those, who are thus willing to come unto God by him. A man may yield an assent to all the great and solemn truths of Christianity,—the miraculous

birth, holy life, cruel suffering, ignominious death, and glorious resurrection and ascension, of our blessed Redeemer;—he may believe, in the abstract, in his inward and spiritual appearance in the hearts of mankind, by his Holy Spirit; and yet he may fall short of the prize immortal,—unless he comes to witness the saving operation of the Holy Spirit in his own heart, and to know thereby, through faith in it, a purifying preparation for the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. How can I sufficiently appreciate or declare the extent of the endless mercy, which suffered me not to perish in the midst of my sins, when so many were swept away by the same pestilential disorder? After having mentioned the facts connected with my sickness and recovery, it seems only due, however feeble on my part the effort, to press the necessity of contending for that saving faith, 'once delivered to the saints.' Without it all religious profession is a dream, a shadow, and a doubt; but with it, a glorious reality:—yea, 'the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,'—even the salvation of the soul, through Christ Jesus our Lord.

"Whilst the severity of the winter greatly facilitated the operations of the French army, by enabling them to cross the frozen rivers without difficulty, and at almost any given point; so it contributed most effectually to harass the diminished numbers of the retreating British forces. It was the more felt from the scarcity of provisions.

"During this harassing march, at such an inclement season, many of the poor men lost parts of their toes, by imprudently sitting down in the frost for too long a time at once, and from not having their feet properly protected. I can well remember having been so wearied myself, as to come to the determination to sit down, and risk the consequence,—although fully aware of the danger of falling asleep in such circumstances; but I was prompted by a

secret impulse to resist the inclination, although nearly overcome with fatigue. Then, after moving about awhile longer, I have again begun to give way, but still struggled on, and when at last, it seemed as if human nature must give up, the thoughts of relations in England, as if I had had a home, would cross my mind, and stimulate me to try again in hope, until something has occurred, to bring relief, and shelter, and repose. Perhaps, if more food could have been procured, the propensity to sleep, which exposure to cold occasioned, would have been irresistible. In this manner the winter wore away, but at length we got so far out of the reach of the French, as to allow a longer space of time for rest at each place we arrived at. The cold weather continued, until we reached the banks of the river Weser; when the retreating wreck of our army was unexpectedly cheered with the sight of the mast-heads of the British fleet, lying off Bremen-leke, and waiting to convey it from the shores of the continent; where it had witnessed so much distress, wasting, and destruction."

In the autumn of 1795, Daniel Wheeler obtained a commission in a regiment destined for the West Indies, and sailed with the expedition appointed to that service, under Sir Ralph Abercrombie, the fleet, including convoy and transports, consisting of about two hundred vessels, with nearly sixteen thousand troops on board. During this voyage he experienced some remarkable preservations, to which he often afterwards referred, as the merciful interpositions of an overruling Providence; of these, the following is one. The vessel in which he was to have sailed, was considered a remarkably fine one, but was much crowded, from the preference given her. On the day before their leaving port, he proposed to one of his friends that they should go on board a collier lying alongside, being one of the hired transports. His fellow-officers ridiculed the idea of preferring her to the noble ship in

which they were; but he and his friend persisted in their intention, and, although straitened for time, succeeded in obtaining permission to transfer themselves according to their inclination. The same evening, a dreadful storm arose, in which the vessel they had quitted went down, with all on board. His heart had, in some measure, been softened by previous chastisements, and this signal preservation produced in his mind indescribable emotions, under a sense of his own sinfulness and unfitness to appear before the tribunal of eternal justice, and of the mercy of God in sparing him awhile longer. A sincere repentance was commenced, and though the work was gradual, its fruits were soon apparent to those around him. After a stormy passage, they were once in sight of the West India Islands, but were driven back by a tremendous hurricane, in which several of the vessels foundered, and great numbers of the troops perished. A malignant fever also raged with fatal violence amongst the crews of the fleet; twenty-seven deaths occurring from this cause, in the ship in which he had embarked.

Bowed under the chastening hand of God, he sought in silent, fervent prayer, for the forgiveness of his sins for Christ's sake: he did not mention the state of his mind to any one, looking to the Lord alone for help. Many years afterwards, on being questioned as to the means made use of in the Divine hand for effecting "a new birth unto righteousness," he said, that he could not remember any outward means having been employed, unless, indeed, he might except a storm at sea, when his mind was deeply affected; and under a feeling of his own lost condition by nature, he was mercifully enabled to see the remedy and the entire spirituality of the Gospel dispensation.

In accordance with this feeling, he remarked,—"I was at this time convinced of Friends' principles, they being neither more nor less, in my estimation, than pure Chris-

tianity;" adding, "I remember when Friends visited me on my application for membership, I told them I was convinced at sea; for I verily believed, in looking back, that this had been the case: no human means were made use of; it was altogether the immediate work of the Holy Spirit upon my heart."

At an early period of his religious course, he became dissatisfied with the military profession, believing it to be altogether inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel, which breathes "peace on earth, good will to men;" and he resolved, if permitted again to reach the shore, that he would endeavor to lead a life to the glory of that Being who had so mercifully visited him with his own free grace. To this resolution he adhered; and on the return of the fleet in the First month, 1796, he resigned his commission. For some time subsequently to this event, he was an inmate of the family of an elder sister, residing in the neighborhood of Sheffield. She had married a member of the Society of Friends, and had herself become convinced of their principles, and united to them, before the return of her brother from the army. In this congenial retreat, his mind became increasingly impressed with the importance of Divine truth; and in the course of a few months, he was led openly to espouse those views of it, of which, in after years, he was an unflinching advocate. The little meeting of Friends which he attended at this period, was that of Handsworth Woodhouse; and although usually held in silence, he was often known to refer to some of these seasons, as times of peculiar instruction to his mind, in which the power of the Lord was sensibly felt, and his Truth revealed.

Being thus entered as a scholar in the school of Christ, he was brought into a state of deep humility, and instructed that the only path in which he could walk with safety, was that of self-denial. Much mental conflict was now his

portion; but peace was only to be obtained by an entire surrender of the will, and in conformity to what he believed to be required of him, he adopted the plain dress. He once recounted to a friend, in lively terms, the trial it was to him, to change a conspicuous article of dress, for one different from that which he was accustomed to wear; especially as, in going to the meeting at Woodhouse, he generally met a number of his former gay acquaintance on their way to the same place of worship he also had previously attended. So hard was it, in this instance, openly to appear as a fool before men, he thought, if his natural life might have been accepted as a substitute, he would gladly have laid it down;—but this was not the thing required.

He diligently examined his heart; and believing submission to his Master's will required it, in child-like obedience and dependence, he yielded, made the change, and found his difficulties to vanish, and peace to flow in his mind. Being faithful in this, and other requisitions of duty, as he humbly walked onward in the just man's path, he realized the truth of his Master's declaration,—"He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much;"—and received the promise attached to faithfulness in the little, in being made ruler over more.

In the course of the year 1797, he was received into membership with the Society of Friends, and about the same time entered into business in Sheffield, in the seed trade. It was striking to those around him, to observe how readily he adapted himself to this total change of habits, applying himself with energy and assiduity to his new occupation: and by the Divine blessing on his exertions, he soon succeeded in obtaining a business fully adequate to his very moderate desires.

Some of his remarks upon entering into business are so excellent and practical, it is deemed right here to insert

them, with the expression of a belief, that when the same spirit shall actuate all who begin, and all who carry on, business, instances of failure and miscarriage will be rare:

"'Little is enough,' when our desires are bounded by moderation;—as for myself, I can truly say, that when I began business, I had no artificial wants, and my real wants were very few. I never studied to keep up appearances, and be like other people; all around me knew I had but small means, and I made no other pretensions. I endeavored, I think, to the best of my ability, to seek the Lord, and positively did not look beyond a sufficiency of food and raiment; and although an utter stranger to business, in every shape, my way was made prosperous."

He has been frequently heard to refer to this period of his life, as one of great peace and comfort; and it appears to have been a time, in which his experience of the reality and power of Divine grace was deepened and enlarged. It was his daily practice, at those intervals when the attendance in his shop could be dispensed with, if but a few minutes at a time, to retire to a small apartment behind it, to explore the contents of the sacred volume; the light which shone upon many passages as he read, and the clear and strong views of religious truth which were then unfolded to his seeking soul, were such as greatly to confirm his faith, and strengthen him to persevere in that straight and narrow path, into which his feet had been so mercifully turned. It was his uniform practice, from his first commencement in trade, to close his shop during the hours appointed for public worship on week days, though this must have required a considerable exercise of faith, at a time when his future support seemed to depend on his own exertions; and he often afterwards expressed his belief that a blessing had rested on this sacrifice of apparent interest to duty.

For many years he filled the office of overseer in the

meeting to which he belonged; and in discharge of the duties connected with it, he was remarkable for his unwearied zeal and charity, his labor, his forbearance, and brotherly kindness. For a number of years, the impression was strong upon his mind that he should be called to the work of the ministry; but in connection with this subject, he was harassed with doubts and fears. He was not rebellious, but his faith was weak, and he earnestly desired to have indubitable evidence that this was the will of his Lord and Master. Such were his mental conflicts, that his health materially suffered; he was often unable to sleep; his nights were frequently spent in prayer. At other times, prayer being his last engagement previous to consigning himself to sleep, he was favoured to feel, on awaking, in a remarkable degree, the influence of the same precious spirit resting upon his mind. "I think," said he, many years afterwards, in conversation with an intimate friend, "at that time I knew in measure what it was to stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime, and to be set in my ward whole nights." At this season he was particularly impressed with the great uncertainty of time, and under this impression, for many months together, night after night, he committed his soul into the hands of God, feeling it very uncertain whether he should see the light of another morning. Sitting in meeting on one occasion, he was particularly impressed with the language of the Saviour, after he had cleansed the lepers: "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine? I tell you, there are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." The remembrance that he had ever read such a passage in the sacred volume, was entirely obliterated from his mind; he thought he felt the requisition of duty to address it to the meeting, but he was perplexed; and his dependence not being simply on the Lord alone, he gave way to reasoning, and in great distress of mind, allowed the

meeting to be broken up. He hastened home, and opening his Bible, the first passage that met his eye was,—"Were there not ten cleansed," &c. Deeply affected by the circumstance, he entered renewedly into covenant with the Lord, that if he would be pleased again to manifest his will, he would be more faithful; and when again he felt a similar requisition, he was strengthened in much brokenness to comply. He was acknowledged a minister in 1816.

Some years before the last-named period, having taken a farm at a short distance from Sheffield, his attention was a good deal turned to agricultural pursuits, in which he took great delight: rural occupations and the simple pleasures of a country life, harmonizing peculiarly with his feelings: he loved to trace in the works and beauties of creation the goodness and power of the Great Creator.

Early in the year 1817, inquiry was made, by order of the late Emperor Alexander of Russia, for a person to undertake the drainage and cultivation of the marshes and waste lands in the neighborhood of his capital—the emperor expressing a particular wish, that a member of the Society of Friends should be selected, Daniel Wheeler believed it his duty to offer himself, and finally received the appointment to this service.

During a preliminary visit to Russia, he found some openings for religious service with the emperor, and others in high stations. In one of these opportunities with Prince Galatzin, he was strengthened to declare unto him Jesus Christ as the alone sure foundation. When departing, the Prince took his hand, saying, "Although *our* languages are different, the language of the *Spirit* is the same."

In the following year he emigrated with his family to the neighborhood of Petersburgh. Uninured to a northern climate, his family suffered much from its rigors, of which the following extract from a letter to a friend, gives a lively picture:

"At one time our prospect was very gloomy, as the children seemed as if they could not bear it; and the four youngest were ill at once, with the scarlet fever;—but the great Physician helped us. They are now, through mercy, in usual health.

"We have abundance of wolves, which are drawn by the severity of the weather nearer to the abodes of men. The intense cold sometimes drives them mad; six cases have occurred within our knowledge, of people being bitten by wolves in this state, four of which proved fatal; and in the other two, the parties recovered, having had the parts cut out, and the wound seared with a hot iron. One man had his face torn by a wolf, close by our house, but he succeeded in killing it; we all saw it, and a terrible animal it is to encounter. This man, though he submitted to an operation subsequently, fell a victim to hydrophobia.

"When the frost is very great, the smaller birds fall to the ground. I have several times seen this. But though the wolf prowls round our habitation by night, we are favored to be quiet and peaceful within, and to partake of many consolations."

Daniel Wheeler remained in Russia about fourteen years; when, under the apprehension that it was required of him by his Divine Master to pay a religious visit to some of the islands of the Pacific Ocean, he believed it right to resign his appointment under the Russian government, and return to his native country. His labor in the cultivation and drainage of the environs of Petersburg had been attended with a very gratifying degree of success, and besides the local improvement thus effected, the most satisfactory evidence of the utility of the undertaking had been afforded, by the extensive adoption of various implements and modes of culture hitherto unknown in Russia. Nor can we suppose that his residence was without its moral influence in that country; where his uniformly guarded and consistent life

and conversation, his unbending integrity, which no self-interest could warp, no influence from without could suppress, will be long had in honorable remembrance. He enjoyed the uniform patronage of the Emperor Alexander, and his successor; with the former he had several interviews, and held in much estimation his character and enlightened views.

The following particulars of one of these opportunities, are from a letter, dated 10th month 3d, 1821:—

"I had a conference with the Emperor a short time since, and was never so much satisfied with any previous interview. He has passed through much conflict of mind for the last twelve months; the state of political affairs, and many other trying circumstances combined, have served to reduce him, both in body and mind. A knowledge of his peculiar situation renders him, in my estimation, an object of commiseration and sympathy; and when I consider the education he has had, and the training up altogether, I am surprised that he should have any relish for serious things. He had been absent about ten months, [upon important business]; and on my telling him he had been a long time away from his large family, he said 'I have had a great deal to do;—it is a very difficult thing to act for a nation; but I hope *I have acted under God:* and the measures I have taken, I hope are approved by Him. I am encouraged to believe so, because not a drop of blood has been spilled. When the nations were in great distress and suffering, during the late calamitous war, then they prayed to God; but they are like the Jews of old,—they have now forgotten Him.' I told him I had often thought of him, and that a petition had been raised in my heart on his account. 'Yes,' he said, 'and I have often thought of you; there has not been one day, not one day, but I have thought of you, and of Allen and Grellet; and always felt myself united to you three in Spirit.'"

"Previously to this conversation, we sat down in silence before the Lord; and in the course of our sitting, my mouth was opened to declare unto him the goodness of God, and His great mercy, variously displayed, to the children of men; and to speak of the precious promises, which the humble heart only can sensibly partake of. After sitting some time in silence, feeling myself at liberty, I told him my mind was relieved,—when he gave me his hand, and attempted to describe his feelings; but was unable to utter anything, except, 'I have felt it,'—laying his hand on his heart. I never saw him so brought down before. He stayed with us, I think, near three hours, and then left us in an affectionate manner, saying, 'I must leave you;—I hope this is not the last time that I shall come: remember me in your prayers.'"

Whilst awaiting in England the completion of the arrangements necessary for his voyage to the Southern Seas, having received the mournful intelligence of the decease of his beloved and affectionate wife, and of the alarming illness of other members of his family, Daniel Wheeler returned to Russia, to pay a visit to his bereaved and suffering children. He brought back with him, to England, his son Charles, who had believed it his duty to offer himself as a companion to his father, in the important engagement before him.

They embarked for the South Seas in the autumn of 1833, on board a vessel of little more than a hundred tons burden; this small size being considered best adapted for a voyage involving frequent disembarcation, and many short trips amongst the various clusters of islands. The outward passage proved remarkably long and tempestuous; the operation technically called "lying-to" having been needful twenty-one times from leaving the coast of South America to arriving in Van Dieman's Land; and for a

time, "every returning day seemed to bring a fresh tempest with it."

From the many vivid descriptions of their perils by sea, the following are selected:

"The height of the waves compelled us again to 'lie-to,' under storm-canvas, for thirty hours. It did seem as if we were now cast off, and left to the fury of the winds and waves, and [notwithstanding the deliverances heretofore witnessed], now the glorious presence was withdrawn, and so completely hidden, that no trace could be perceived to administer one glimmering ray of hope in the midst of our complicated distress. On looking at our forlorn situation, and the overwhelming appearance of the storm, the fury of which had been only aggravated by every change which had so far taken place, it now seemed too late for any thing to occur that could operate in our favor, as the sea was running in confused heaps, different ways, in a frightful manner, caused by the wind having shifted to different points, and from each point blowing furiously. About three o'clock in the afternoon, the mercury fell lower and lower, when we were overtaken with a squall of wind, truly appalling and terrific, which in a short time afterwards was succeeded by a second, still more violent; but, through the medium of these two dreadful blasts, which at first threatened nothing but destruction, our deliverance was marvellously effected. Such was the fury of these two typhoons, that they actually, in a short space of time, changed the wild and disfigured surface of the troubled ocean from unruly mountains to a rugged level, by their boisterous breath, leaving nothing but a sea white as milk with foam. From this time the storm subsided, and at midnight we were again enabled to bear away for Van Dieman's Land, distant about four thousand seven hundred miles."

Our limits will preclude entering into many particulars of his labors in these parts, but it may be proper to mention, that after leaving Hobart Town, he sailed to Sydney, and from thence to Tahiti; afterwards visiting, in succession, the Society, Sandwich, Harvey, and Friendly Island groups. From the Friendly Islands, he proceeded to New Zealand, and returned home in the Spring of 1838. At these places, many meetings with the natives were held; the missionaries, with very little exception, aiding as interpreters, with much liberality and christian affection. Many of these assemblies were large, and appear to have been highly favored with the sensible evidence of the divine presence.

He found an open door among all classes, both natives and foreigners, and as much as in him lay, and as he was put in trust therewith, he powerfully and *freely* preached the gospel, being careful in some cases where presents were made him, to return their full value:—thus, with the Apostle, making "the Gospel of Christ without charge;" and being enabled to say with him, "I have coveted no man's silver or gold," for "I seek not yours, but you." Consistent with his conduct herein, is the belief expressed by him, "that if no money was permitted to circulate in connection with the outward performance of any religious service, the religion of Jesus would soon shake off the defilements with which it has been sullied, and again shine forth in primitive purity and lustre."

Large and full testimonies to the weight and value of his religious services were repeatedly given in writing by those amongst whom he labored. Grateful acknowledgments were also received for the liberal supplies of useful articles, furnished the natives and others, including medicine for the sick, &c.

At most of the islands, D. W. had occasion to deplore the devastating effects produced on the natives by the in-

troduction of ardent spirits; and by the immoral conduct of the crews belonging to the ships which trade there. Notwithstanding the great exertions made by the missionaries, wherever their influence extends, to stop the overwhelming torrent of iniquity, their endeavors are constantly frustrated by the refusal of the captains and those in command of the ships, to co-operate with them. D. W. describes one of the islands as an almost complete wreck, from the effects of habits of intoxication. Many of the people had relapsed into their former idolatrous habits, converted even the bread-fruit into ardent spirits by distillation, and given way to the most dissolute practices; and, as might be expected, were in a miserable and famishing condition. His language respecting these poor people. may be quoted as expressive of his feelings towards the Islanders generally, whom he visited in the course of this long and toilsome voyage:—"great is the love I feel for them, as a stream in my heart, and particularly towards the poor neglected children."

Firm in his reliance upon his Divine Master's promise, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," it was Daniel Wheeler's practice, whilst on shipboard, besides assembling the crew twice on First-days, for devotional purposes, to continue a mid-week meeting, even when the attendance was limited to his son and himself. Deeply instructive to the Christian mind are the simple records of this acknowledgment of their dependence upon Christ Jesus, as their teacher—the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

The following extracts are from his Journal, whilst in the South Seas:—

7th month 6th, 1835.—"On landing at Hitea, we were shown to an empty house, like a large bird-cage in appearance. It was built with open lattice walls, and screens of cocoa-nut branches to keep out the wind. The floors were

covered with withered grass, in a very dirty condition from long use, being laid upon loose earth, in a low and damp situation. There were latticed divisions, which made four apartments; but not a door, either within or without. The people soon brought us a supply of food, according to their custom of treating strangers; and in due time, beds were prepared for us, consisting of frames of wood, supported on posts driven into the ground, and spread with clean mats.

"We paid a visit to the resident chief, to whom I was no stranger, having seen him more than once on board the vessel. At his house a large 'feeding' was preparing, to which we were invited, but declined partaking of it. * * As we proceeded with conversation, the large company more and more settled down into serious thoughtfulness. The important distinction was explained to them, between the Word which was in the beginning with God and was God, and the Bible; a subject on which their ideas were confused, from having been accustomed to hear the Scriptures styled 'the word of God.'"

After alluding to the memorable conference between the Saviour of the world and the woman of Samaria, who, when told she had had five husbands, &c., left her water-pot and went her way into the city, and said: "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" D. W. asked them if they had not, at seasons, felt something within themselves, which brought to their remembrance sins that had been long ago committed; things which they would be glad to forget, much rather than remember with painful retrospect: inquiring whether they had not been sensible of this, long before they ever saw the face of a missionary, or heard his voice,—on this, to use D. W.'s own words, "some of them shook their heads, and answered in the most satisfactory manner, with unequivocal simplicity and sincerity,—yes, *that* they had, long enough ago."

He also held many meetings with the crews of American and English ships, met with at the various anchorages of the South Sea islands; freely distributing the Holy Scriptures, and other religious books, among them. Having been liberally provided with school materials, he was enabled, also, very effectually to assist in the important work of education.

Not many months elapsed after his return from the South Seas, before he embarked on a religious visit to some parts of North America. "Shortly after leaving England," he says, "on my way to the islands of the Pacific, an evidence was granted to me that I should have to visit North America, after the service on which I was then entering should be accomplished. Such a marvellous unfolding of the Divine will as to the future, so condescendingly vouchsafed at so great a length of time beforehand, could not fail to support, comfort and strengthen me, in every season of trial and conflict, both inward and outward, which I had afterwards to pass through; and although at seasons my mind was put closely to the test, it was *again and again renewed*, from the heavenly treasury of living faith, to strengthen my confidence in its holy Author and Finisher; —for the brightest gleam of that soul-sustaining, loving kindness, which is better than life, soon loses its lustre, unless renewed from time to time by Him in whose presence only there is life." In America, his attention seems to have been particularly directed to the Society of Friends, and to ship-owners and persons connected with a sea-faring life. With the latter, his main concern was, to point out the heavy responsibility of those whose calling brought them in contact with uncivilized tribes; thus literally complying with the very striking request of a South Sea chieftain, "to tell the people of England and America to have mercy on them: because it was these countries that sent the poison [alcoholic liquors] amongst them."

The latter years of Daniel Wheeler's life were marked with much domestic affliction. In addition to the loss of his wife, already mentioned, he had to mourn the removal by death of the eldest and youngest of his children, which took place during his voyage to the South Seas. And now, whilst prosecuting his religious engagement in America, he was tried by the dangerous illness of his son Charles, the faithful companion of his long labors in the Pacific. Naturally of warm feelings, and an affectionate disposition, these bereavements were severely felt; yet was he enabled to bear them with much of the dignity of the Christian mourner, and whilst acutely suffering, to adopt, as his own, the language, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

After visiting parts of New York, New England, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Nova Scotia and Canada, in the winter of 1839, he felt himself at liberty to return once more to Europe.

Soon after witnessing the peaceful close of his son, he again quitted his native shores for New York. After being about a week at sea, he took a cold, which terminated in pleurisy. There was no surgeon on board, and the disease gained a fearful ascendency before he landed at New York (on the 28th of 4th month, 1840):—all the skill and kindness here enjoyed proved unavailing to arrest it.

On being informed, soon after landing, of the improbability of his recovery, he replied calmly, "All has been done that could be done—only write to my children how it is. The work has been going on with the day. It is a great thing to be free from pain. I want nothing but the love of my heavenly Father; and I witness it." In a few lines afterwards addressed to his distant family, written in a very tremulous and almost illegible hand, he remarks, "I have been landed a very sick man in this city; but my most gracious Lord hath borne me up in a marvellous manner,